

SETTLEMENT AND ADJUSTMENT OF THE OREGON
QUESTION.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A copy of the treaty entered into between the government of the United States and that of Great Britain, respecting the Oregon Territory.

AUGUST 6, 1846.

Read, and laid upon the table.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States :

I communicate, herewith, a copy of a convention for the settlement and adjustment of the Oregon question, which was concluded in this city on the 15th day of June last, between the United States and her Britannic Majesty. This convention has since been duly ratified by the respective parties, and the ratifications were exchanged at London on the 17th day of July, 1846.

It now becomes important that provision should be made by law, at the earliest practicable period, for the organization of a territorial government in Oregon.

It is also deemed proper that our laws regulating trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes east of the Rocky mountains should be extended to such tribes within our territory as dwell beyond them ; and that a suitable number of Indian agents should be appointed for the purpose of carrying these laws into execution.

It is likewise important that mail facilities, so indispensable for the diffusion of information, and for binding together the different portions of our extended confederacy, should be afforded to our citizens west of the Rocky mountains.

There is another subject to which I desire to call your special attention. It is of great importance to our country generally, and especially to our navigating and whaling interests, that the Pacific coast, and, indeed, the whole of our territory west of the Rocky mountains, should speedily be filled up by a hardy and patriotic population. Emigrants to that territory have many difficulties to encounter and privations to endure, in their long and perilous journey ; and, by the time they reach their place of destina-

tion, their pecuniary means are generally much reduced, if not altogether exhausted. Under these circumstances, it is deemed but an act of justice that these emigrants, whilst most effectually advancing the interests and policy of the government, should be aided by liberal grants of land. I would, therefore, recommend that such grants be made to actual settlers, upon the terms and under the restrictions and limitations which Congress may think advisable.

JAMES K. POLK.

WASHINGTON, August 5, 1846.

The United States of America and her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, deeming it to be desirable for the future welfare of both countries that the state of doubt and uncertainty which has hitherto prevailed respecting the sovereignty and government of the territory on the northwest coast of America, lying westward of the Rocky or Stony mountains, should be finally terminated by an amicable compromise of the rights mutually asserted by the two parties over the said territory, have respectively named plenipotentiaries to treat and agree concerning the terms of such settlement; that is to say: the President of the United States of America has, on his part, furnished with full powers James Buchanan, Secretary of State of the United States, and her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland has, on her part, appointed the Right Hon. Richard Pakenham, a member of her Majesty's most honorable privy council, and her Majesty's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the United States; who, after having communicated to each other their respective full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon and concluded the following articles:

ARTICLE I.

From the point on the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, where the boundary laid down in existing treaties and conventions between the United States and Great Britain terminates, the line of boundary between the territories of the United States and those of her Britannic Majesty shall be continued westward, along the said forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's island; and thence southerly, through the middle of the said channel, and of Fuca's straits, to the Pacific ocean: *Provided, however,* That the navigation of the whole of the said channel and straits, south of the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, remain free and open to both parties.

ARTICLE II.

From the point at which the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude shall be found to intersect the great northern branch of the Columbia river, the navigation of the said branch shall be free and open to the Hudson's Bay Company, and to all British subjects trading with the same, to the point where the said branch meets the main stream of the Columbia, and thence down the said main stream to the ocean, with free access into and through the said river or rivers, it being understood that all the usual portages along

the line thus described shall in like manner be free and open. In navigating the said river or rivers, British subjects, with their goods and produce, shall be treated on the same footing as citizens of the United States; it being, however, always understood, that nothing in this article shall be construed as preventing, or intended to prevent, the government of the United States from making any regulations respecting the navigation of the said river or rivers, not inconsistent with the present treaty.

ARTICLE III.

In the future appropriation of the territory south of the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, as provided in the first article of this treaty, the possessory rights of the Hudson's Bay Company, and of all British subjects who may be already in the occupation of land or other property, lawfully acquired, within the said territory, shall be respected.

ARTICLE IV.

The farms, lands, and other property of every description, belonging to the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, on the north side of the Columbia river, shall be confirmed to the said company. In case, however, the situation of those farms and lands should be considered by the United States to be of public and political importance, and the United States government should signify a desire to obtain possession of the whole, or of any part thereof, the property so required shall be transferred to the said government, at a proper valuation, to be agreed upon between the parties.

ARTICLE V.

The present treaty shall be ratified by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof, and by her Britannic Majesty; and the ratifications shall be exchanged at London, at the expiration of six months from the date hereof, or sooner if possible.

In witness whereof, the respective plenipotentiaries have signed the same, and have affixed thereto the seals of their arms.

Done at Washington the fifteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty six.

JAMES BUCHANAN, [L. S.]
RICHARD PAKENHAM, [L. S.]

